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**Thesis Brief
for the Candidate of Political Science Degree**

**Inverse vector model of ensuring national security of Russia
in the conditions of hybrid war**

Specialty 5.5.4. – International relations, global and regional issues

Moscow, 2024

Relevance of the research topic. In the context of tectonic shifts and transformations that have occurred in the world over the past decades, many problems of protecting national interests and ensuring national security appear in a new light. If during previous periods of human history the armed power was considered the main instrument for performing this function, then in the current conditions, along with military force, other forms, methods and means are becoming increasingly important. Thus, one of the modern sociologists of war, Martin Van Creveld, argues that old-type wars are becoming a thing of the past, and new-type wars are becoming dominant, the latter require new forces and means, the development of adaptive strategies and tactics. The emergence of a large number of conflicts that are attributed to a hybrid nature attracts the attention of researchers who state that hybrid wars have become the most common form of conflict in the 21st century, combining the complexity and potential connectivity of various threats. Political studies emphasize that it is hybrid war and hybrid threats that "to a significant extent determine many modern trends in the development of peace and war."

Most domestic researchers consider hybrid warfare as a threat to Russia's national security, aimed at undermining state sovereignty and independence, territorial integrity of our country and, as a consequence, its subjectivity in the modern system of international relations.

In characterizing the relevance of the topic, it is necessary to highlight the following aspects:

Firstly, insufficient theoretical development of the problem of international hybrid confrontation at the theoretical level. Understanding by Western ruling elites of the impossibility of conducting a competitive struggle to maintain the unipolar structure of the world (the dominance of the West) by means of war, characteristic of the last century, forces them to use hybrid forms of confrontation. This, in turn, gives rise to significant problems in the implementation of political and military-

political practice of modern states, exposed to hybrid threats from their geopolitical opponents in the context of the formation of a polycentric world;

Secondly, the role of Russia as one of the centers of power in the emerging polycentric world is objectively predetermined by developing trends in the sphere of geopolitics and geostrategy. This causes tension in relations with the West, striving to maintain hegemony, and forces the latter to look for new ways of destructive influence on the Russian statehood. Any foreign policy step of the Russian Federation aimed at strengthening statehood, realizing foreign policy interests, expanding the zone of geopolitical influence provokes a reaction from the West in the form of using various combinations of methods and technologies of hybrid influence, which, in turn, negatively affects the state of Russia's national security. For political, scientific and expert circles, there is a need for a deep and detailed analysis of the nature of hybrid military-political, socio-political, economic and informational influence on the Russian state in the context of the current geopolitical conflict, which is usually characterized as a confrontation between the collective West and post-Soviet Russia for the future world order;

Thirdly, the Russian Federation, having found itself at the turn of the 2020s in a very difficult geopolitical and geoeconomic situation (sanction pressure from the West, the COVID-19 pandemic, a new round of the arms race, intensification of political pressure, etc.), is forced to look for fundamentally new, promising mechanisms for upholding and protecting national interests and ensuring national security, taking into account the direction of the development vector of the new world order towards polycentricity and the difficult-to-predict transformations of the world political structure, contributing to the emergence of previously unknown challenges and threats. That is, new threats to Russia's national security force Russia, drawn into this type of confrontation, to look for effective methods and mechanisms to counter and neutralize them in order to fully implement foreign policy and ensure national security.

Thus, the relevance of the research topic is determined by the severity of the crisis in relations between the collective West (the Euro-Atlantic community), provoking the intensification of hybrid warfare and the tightening of its instruments, and Russia, seeking to enlist the support of states with a clearly anti-Atlantic foreign policy (primarily China), characterizing the international political confrontation for the future world order. The crisis has shown that Russia is unable to cope with a number of threats of a hybrid nature, which negatively affects the state of national security and the prospects for the development of Russian statehood in a hostile geopolitical environment. The need to search for and develop approaches (models) to ensuring Russia's national security, working on new combinations of principles, mechanisms and measures, capable of not only effectively countering hybrid threats, but also facilitating the implementation of a proactive foreign policy in the context of the formation of a polycentric world order, is becoming more urgent.

As a result of a critical review of scientific literature on the topic of the dissertation research, it was established that in modern Russian scientific literature there are no studies devoted to a comprehensive analysis of the state and prospects for ensuring Russia's national security in the context of hybrid confrontation with an exit to specific proposals of functional approaches (models) for neutralizing hybrid threats and the formation of a fundamentally new level of ensuring national security and realizing Russia's national interests.

The problematic situation lies in the discrepancy between the system of practical measures taken by Russia to ensure national security and the critical level of threats generated by the specifics of a hybrid war in the context of the formation of a polycentric world order. The consequence is a gradual narrowing of the so-called near segment of the zone of Russia's geopolitical interests (the post-Soviet space), aggravation of problems in domestic politics, partial international isolation, and an increasing threat of a direct clash with the NATO bloc in the format of a proxy war.

The scientific task that this study is aimed at solving is to create a scientifically sound approach to the strategy of ensuring Russia's national security in the context of a critical aggravation of threats generated by the specifics of a hybrid war in the context of the formation of a polycentric world order.

The object of the study is Russia's national security in the context of a hybrid war.

The subject of the study is the mechanisms for ensuring Russia's national security in the context of a hybrid war.

The purpose and objectives of the study. The purpose of the study is to develop an inverse vector model and a comprehensive strategic approach to ensuring Russia's national security in the context of a hybrid war. The stated objective of the work determines the need to solve the following tasks:

1. To characterize research approaches to assessing the current state of Russia's national security in the context of a hybrid war as a problem of international relations.

2. To identify and characterize the specifics of using hybrid war methods and technologies in the post-Soviet geopolitical space.

3. To define and classify threats to Russia's national security in the context of a hybrid war, to identify the degree of their activity.

4. To create an inverse vector model of ensuring Russia's national security in the context of a hybrid war.

5. To develop relevant mechanisms for ensuring Russia's national security in the context of a hybrid war using the inverse vector model.

6. To develop a comprehensive strategic approach to interaction with the main geopolitical opponents based on the inverse vector model proposed in the study, to offer a number of practical recommendations.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study is formed by the principles of historicism, scientific character and objectivity; provisions of the

theory of international relations (political realism), the theory of national security and geopolitical theory; systemic, spherical, strategic, conflictological, systemic-activity approaches; methods of retrospective, comparative, statistical, vector analysis, the method of expert assessments; as well as special methods: scenario analysis, simulation modeling, the method of functional triads.

At the first stage of the study, the systemic, conflictological approaches and structural-functional analysis made it possible to determine the key parameters of the hybrid war waged against Russia and the nature of hybrid threats, their structure and interrelations, the prospects and rates of their intensification, the specifics of the environment for the development of hybrid conflicts and the parameters for choosing a victim country and suitable tools, as well as to propose the author's classification of threats. The use of retrospective and comparative methods made it possible to identify the characteristic features of the deployment of hybrid activity of Western countries in relation to Russia in the post-bipolar period. The results of the analysis were verified by the method of expert assessments and compared with the provisions of one of the specialized program documents of the USA. The system-activity approach and the triadic method made it possible to establish that the hybrid war has the nature of an offensive strategy in the struggle to preserve the unipolar world. By means of terminological analysis, imperfections in the definitions of "hybrid war" proposed by domestic and foreign researchers were identified and the author's definition of this phenomenon was proposed. The analysis of documents and statistical analysis made it possible to clarify the specifics of the implementation of the hybrid war strategy at the tactical and operational levels.

Within the framework of the second stage of the study, using the vector approach and vector analysis, the triadic method, as well as simulation modeling, an inverse vector model of national security was developed and, on its basis, mechanisms for ensuring Russia's national security in the context of a hybrid war in five key areas (directions) where five groups of threats are concentrated, defined as "triads of hybrid threats". The functionality of the proposed mechanisms was verified using the method of expert assessments and scenario analysis. Further, the

proposed inverse vector model was used as the basis for a comprehensive strategic approach to interaction with key geopolitical opponents (the USA, individual EU countries, NATO) and ensuring national security in the context of the formation of a polycentric world order.

Empirical basis of the study. The solution to the designated scientific problem involves the use of an extensive empirical base, allowing for the verification of the theoretical and practical results and conclusions of the study. The following groups of sources were defined as the empirical base of the study.

The first group of sources, containing a significant amount of information on the nature and intensity of hybrid confrontation, was formed by open access materials of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, the FSB of Russia, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, etc., presented on official Internet sites.

The second group of sources on national security issues in the context of a hybrid war includes materials contained in online news versions of various Russian and foreign media outlets (Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Izvestia, Vedomosti, Krasnaya Zvezda, Zavtra, Delovoy Mir, Svobodnaya Pressa, Defensenews, National Review, Mint Press News, etc.), information and analytical agencies (TASS, Tsargrad, Regnum, RIA Novosti, Russia Today, Global Security Review, etc.): interviews with senior officials, heads of ministries and departments, comments on events and facts related to the problem under study, presented by Russian scientists and experts, specialists in national and international security, information and analytical materials of open access.

The third group of sources consists of expert interviews obtained during conversations between the author of the study and Russian specialists in national security and foreign policy issues. The expert survey was conducted on July 16-21, 2021 in Moscow, with 29 experts taking part in the survey. The materials of the expert interviews were used in the implementation of scenario analysis and the application of the expert assessment method.

The provisions submitted for defense:

1. According to the author's definition proposed in the study, hybrid war is an offensive strategy aimed at desovereignization of the opponent state and deconstruction of its spheres of influence with the purpose of subsequent transfer under full or partial geopolitical control of the country-initiator of hybrid confrontation.

2. The hybrid war of the collective West against Russia is continuous in the context of the transformation of the international relations system. The synchronous activity of the "triads" of hybrid threats creates a synergistic effect in the complex negative impact on the national security system of Russia. The model of linear resistance of the state to hybrid threats is unstable and, accordingly, ineffective. It is possible to effectively counter the hybrid war strategies used by the West by using mechanisms and strategies based on the vector approach. The developed inverse vector model of interaction of the national security system with the identified structures of hybrid threats can be used as a model of ensuring Russia's national security in the context of a hybrid war within the framework of the decomposition of the task of comprehensive neutralization of hybrid threats. The specified model is suitable for developing relevant mechanisms for ensuring Russia's national security and a comprehensive strategic approach to Russia's interaction with key geopolitical opponents.

3. The developed mechanisms for countering hybrid threats and ensuring the national security of the Russian Federation based on the inverse vector model are capable of successfully countering the "triads" of hybrid threats, neutralizing the possibilities of a synergistic effect when influencing the national security system of Russia. The implementation of the comprehensive strategic approach proposed in the study based on the inverse vector model and a set of relevant mechanisms for countering hybrid threats will allow in the medium term to qualitatively adjust Russia's behavioral strategy in Russia-West relations, in the short term - to recognize the enemy's plans in time and reduce the intensity of the hybrid war, organize

effective counteraction to hybrid threats, which will have a positive effect on the state of Russia's national and international security. By changing the paradigm of relations with the West, Russia will be able to realize the possibilities of a preventive and long-term policy to form a loyal foreign policy environment. A positive consequence may be the expansion of the near segment of Russia's geopolitical interests, an exit from partial international isolation, and a weakening of the threat of a direct clash with the NATO bloc.

Research hypothesis. The proposed inverse vector model and the comprehensive strategic approach based on it, including a system of relevant mechanisms for countering hybrid threats and ensuring Russia's national security in the context of a hybrid war, will allow for the effective resolution of foreign policy problems and ensuring the national security of the Russian Federation, strengthening the state's position on the world stage in the current geopolitical situation, creating conditions for promoting national interests and forming prerequisites for the establishment of Russia's international status as a key center of power in the system of the new world order, i.e., will qualitatively correct the behavioral strategy in Russia-West relations.

The theoretical significance of the results of the dissertation research is determined by the fact that they provide a holistic scientific understanding of the state of Russia's national security in the context of geopolitical confrontation, the specifics of the formation and implementation of foreign policy strategies, geopolitical factors and processes in Eurasia. Of significant importance for political science are the author's definition of a hybrid war proposed in the study, which has a high level of adaptability for effectively solving practical problems, an inverse vector model of ensuring national security and a comprehensive strategic approach to interaction with geopolitical opponents based on it. Verification of the results of developments through the use of the expert assessment method showed the ability of these models and strategic approaches to have a positive impact on the level of ensuring Russia's national security and realizing its national interests, increasing its role in the system of international relations in the context of the formation of a

polycentric world. The proposed model and approach can become a methodological and applied basis for international practice in neutralizing hybrid threats and countering them in order to strengthen national security.

The practical significance of the study lies in the possibility of using its results in the activities of government agencies responsible for the formation and implementation of the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation and other strategic planning documents, as well as stabilization of relations between Russia and Western countries, forecasting the development of the situation in the near segment of the zone of geopolitical interests of Russia (near abroad countries). The results of the study can be used in the process of teaching students and listeners of educational institutions, specialized courses for employees of ministries and departments of the Russian Federation dealing with problems of foreign policy management, ensuring national security of Russia, practical geopolitics in the context of eliminating the problems of modern hybrid confrontation.



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